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The Very Rev.
Dean Darby

Illustrated by
Herbert Railton

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Chester Cathedral

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Chester Cathedral
S.E. View.

Chester Cathedral

By

The Very Rev.
John L. Darby, D.D.
Dean of Chester

Illustrated by
Herbert Railton

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Chester Cathedral

ALTHOUGH the See of Chester was created 357 years ago, several signs remind one of ecclesiastical foundations which then came to an end. The name of St. Werburgh still is retained for the street leading to the Cathedral from the Eastgate, and the street running along the north side of the Cathedral is still Abbey Street. The old gateway is still the Abbey Gate, and the modern square is Abbey Square.

The name of the Saint and these local allusions point to a history prior to the date at which the church became a Cathedral.

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St. Werburgh, the daughter of Wulfer, King of Mercia and Ermenilde, died at Trentham at the close of the seventh century, and was buried at Hanbury. Her Life was translated from the Latin into English by Henry Bradshaw. As he died A.D. 1513, his work was probably done late in the fifteenth century. It is quaint and cannot be deemed historic, but there are certain facts which may be accepted as true.

It is held that he is mistaken in the following passage :

> In the Abbey of Chester she is shrined richly,
> Prioress and ladye of that holy place,
> The chief protectress of the said Monastery,
> Long before the Conquest, by divine grace
> Protectress of the City, she is and ever was
> Called special primate, and principal president
> There ruling under our Lord Omnipotent,

because St. Werburgh never was Prioress in Chester; yet the writer of this Life may possibly mean no more than that the religious house at Chester was one of those which her

Choir from N.E.

uncle Ethelred put under her rule. For it is recorded that Ethelred persuaded St. Werburgh to leave Ely, where she had devoted herself to God, to bring all the religious women in the kingdom of Mercia to the observance of the strictest discipline.

However, her shrine is still to be seen at Chester, her body having been brought to Chester in the year A.D. 875. Some years before this date the Danes, or, as it is expressed in the Chronicle of Florence of Worcester, "the army of the Pagans marched into Mercia and wintered at a place called Hreopedun [Repton]; it moreover compelled Burhed, King of the Mercians, to quit his kingdom against his will [A.D. 874]. After his expulsion the Danish pirates subdued the whole Mercian kingdom." In consequence of these troubles the removal of St. Werburgh's body took place, as Repton was within six miles of Hanbury.

If not from this date it must have been as a result of the translation of the relics

that the Abbey, which had originally been dedicated to the Holy Trinity and St. Oswald, became known as that of St. Werburgh.

It is recorded that in the reign of King Athelstan (A.D. 925) secular canons were established in a monastery of St. Werburgh and St. Oswald.

When we come to more certain history we find that in A.D. 1057 Leofric, Earl of Chester, repaired the buildings and bestowed many privileges. But with the coming of the Normans property was lost, and the Abbey was reconstituted. In the year A.D. 1093 Anselm prevailed on Hugh Lupus, Earl of Chester, to banish the secular canons and to introduce regulars of the Order of St. Benedict. Anselm at this time must have been just sixty years of age, for he was born in 1033 at Aosta. Impressed in early youth by the religious influence of his mother, he was drawn towards the monastic life ; after her death he crossed the Mount Cenis into France. In a short time, attracted by the

fame of Lanfranc, he settled at the Monastery of Bec, where Lanfranc was Prior. It is through the influence of Anselm that Bec and Chester became intimately connected. Bec was famed for intellectual vigour, as well it might be with two such men as Lanfranc and Anselm; and, as not alone Chester but the Church in England was greatly affected by its method and power, it is well to give an outline of the history of that Abbey which in the eleventh century was the spring of the monastic life at Canterbury and at Chester.

The Monastery of Bec Hellouin or Helluin was situate some nine leagues from Rouen. Helluin or Herlwin, son of Angot and Hellois, was the founder; he was descended from the Danes and allied to the Dukes of Flanders. At first he chose a military life and was one of the knights of Robert, Duke of Normandy; but at the age of forty he renounced the world, and in A.D. 1034 received the monastic habit from Herbert,

Bishop of Lisieux, who ordained him priest and made him Abbot of the monastery which he built in the same year on his estate at Bonneville. Five years after, owing to want of water, he built another in the valley on the rivulet of Bec. The number of those who put themselves under his rule increased daily, and, as the house now proved too small, Lanfranc, whom he had appointed Prior, persuaded him to build a larger one. This he did in 1061, but the new church was not dedicated till October 22, 1077; this building gave some features to Chester, notably the strange stone roof of the apse at the east end of the south choir aisle, so admirably drawn in the south-east view of the Cathedral. This very striking and unusual form seems to have been derived from Bec, and although unique in England is found at Norrey in Normandy. It is a survival, through several changes, of the influence of Anselm and his Chaplain Richard, the first Abbot of the Regulars. Lanfranc,

who from being Prior at Bec had been raised to be Abbot of St. Stephen at Caen, was at this date Archbishop of Canterbury. At the dedication of the new church at Bec Lanfranc was accompanied by Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, Gilbert of Evreux, Gilbert of Lisieux, Robert of Sees, Ernaud of Mons, and a great number of persons of distinction of France, England, and Normandy.

Helluin died in August 1078, and was succeeded as Abbot by Anselm, who ruled at Bec for fifteen years, and, having gone to England on monastic business, was, against his will, consecrated Archbishop of Canterbury on December 4, 1093. It must have been earlier in this year that Hugh Lupus—who introduced, with the consent of King William II., monks of the Benedictine Order—called Anselm to visit him in his sickness and to obtain his aid in having the monastery at Chester released from royal tribute. Anselm laid the foundation of the Norman church and appointed his Chaplain

Richard, who was a monk of Bec, the first Abbot of the Benedictine monastery of St. Werburgh in Chester.

Not a vestige of the earlier church can be traced, but very interesting fragments of Anselm's church remain. They are the eastern wall of the north transept, where may be seen small arches of simple but distinctly Norman character, and within the chapel now used as the canons' vestry there can be detected the form of the Norman arch which connected this chapel with the transept.

In this chapel may be seen a very interesting example of ironwork, not, indeed, of the same date as the chapel, but wrought by Thomas de Leghtone in the thirteenth century. The character of its hinges is very like that of the hinges of the press in the Church of St. Jacques at Liège, which are figured in Mr. J. Starkie Gardner's "Ironwork." He writes: "The distribution of richly stamped ironwork of the French

Cloisters

type in England is rather remarkable, and the specimens are so limited in number that they might well have been the work of a single smith. Through the Eleanor grille we are able to connect them with Thomas de Leghtone, and from the similarity in the forms and stamps used we can only conclude that he had been to France, or had an opportunity of studying some typical piece of work, particularly the grille at St. Denis, which resembled so closely the one he made for Westminster Abbey." Later on he adds, "the small hinges at Chester could have been sent by road."

Referring again to Anselm's church, the doorway between the eastern cloister and the nave is Norman, and the north wall of the nave, the Norman character of which is seen in the cloister; there with Norman arches and mouldings are the *armaria—i.e.*, the places where the monks had their book-shelves. These recesses have often been incorrectly described as tombs of Abbots.

But perhaps the most interesting part of the Norman work is the substructure of what was to be the north-west tower. The work is very fine, and connected with it is the crypt, with its striking Norman pillars, over which was the great hall of the Abbot. There is one other indication of the Norman church remaining in the north choir aisle; the base of the column on which rested the arch of the apse forming the end of the aisle of that date was found when the Cathedral was restored some twenty-eight years ago.

Little is known of the history of the monastery or of the church for many years after the Norman foundation. Earl Hugh, having given many gifts to it, died A.D. 1101, and was buried in the cemetery of the Abbey; but his nephew Randle, surnamed de Meschines, removed the body to the chapter-house, as appears from the charter by which Randle, or Ranulph, granted Upton to the Abbey: "Notum sit vobis pariter me concessisse quando feci transferri

corpus Hugonis comitis avunculi mei a cimiterio in capitulum,"—"Be it known to you that in like wise I granted, when I had the body of Count Hugo, my uncle, removed from the graveyard to the chapter-house, etc."

It is recorded that in 1180 nearly the whole of Chester was burnt on a Sunday in Mid-Lent, which may account for the fact that Geoffry, the seventh Abbot (A.D. 1194), complained that the church was in ruins, and that there was no money with which to rebuild it, but he succeeded in getting sufficient to build the choir, and in the time of his successor, Hugh Grylle, the repairs seemed to have been completed and the affairs of the monastery appear to have become more prosperous, as Earl Randle, the third of that name, surnamed Blundeville, gave the monks leave to extend their buildings to the north. Hugh Grylle died in 1226: unhappily scarcely any of his work or of his predecessor's can be seen. Troubles

soon followed, and the nature of the struggles may account for the fact that in less than a century the church had well-nigh gone, and another had been built on the ruins of it.

Thomas Capenhurst, who succeeded as twelfth Abbot in 1249, had to resist the hand of the spoilers, and in his time some of the buildings of the Abbey were destroyed to strengthen the city against a siege. But it was not only local troubles such as these which pressed hardly on the Church at this time. It must be borne in mind that, though laymen were hard in wresting lands from the Church, ecclesiastics were unscrupulous also. It was a time of general unrest, and of that kind of unrest which hinders progress in Church work of all kinds. We have but to remember that at this period the reaction against Rome began; it was at this very time that the great Bishop Grosseteste went to the Papal Court at Lyons to tell Pope Innocent IV. home truths. He complained of the utter corruption in the Church,

Choir
Chester Cathedral

and boldly said before the Pope and his Court:—"The cause, the fountain, the origin of all this is this Court of Rome, not only in that it does not put to flight these evils and purge away these abominations, when it alone has the power to do so, and is pledged most fully to do so; but still more because by its dispensations, provisions, and collations to the pastoral care it appoints before the eyes of this sun men such as I have described, not pastors but destroyers of men." It was not, however, in the ecclesiastical affairs alone that foreign interference was felt to be oppressive. England was galled by the Court being "full of foreigners, whose wealth and extravagance were in strong contrast with the state of beggary to which Henry declared himself reduced." With the Barons, Simon de Montfort, ambitious and highly accomplished as a soldier, won the victory at Lewes, and in the Parliament of 1265 secured for himself the Earldom of Chester.

In this year, on April 17, Simon de Albo Monasterio, or Whitchurch, was elected Abbot; his election was opposed by Lucas de Taney, justiciary of Chester, but Simon de Montfort confirmed the election. By the battle of Evesham the victory of Lewes was reversed, and Simon de Montfort was slain. On August 4 the Abbot, however, made peace with Prince Edward. During his rule (1265–1289) very important work was accomplished; Simon de Whitchurch not only recovered some manors, he also undertook to build. At this date the beautiful Lady Chapel was substituted for an earlier one. The piscina is of singular elegance, with a traceried head.

The chapter-house and its vestibule—exquisite examples of architecture as it developed from the Norman to Early English—may have been constructed at a somewhat earlier date. As the number of monks had been increased some twenty years before Simon de Whitchurch was elected, he may,

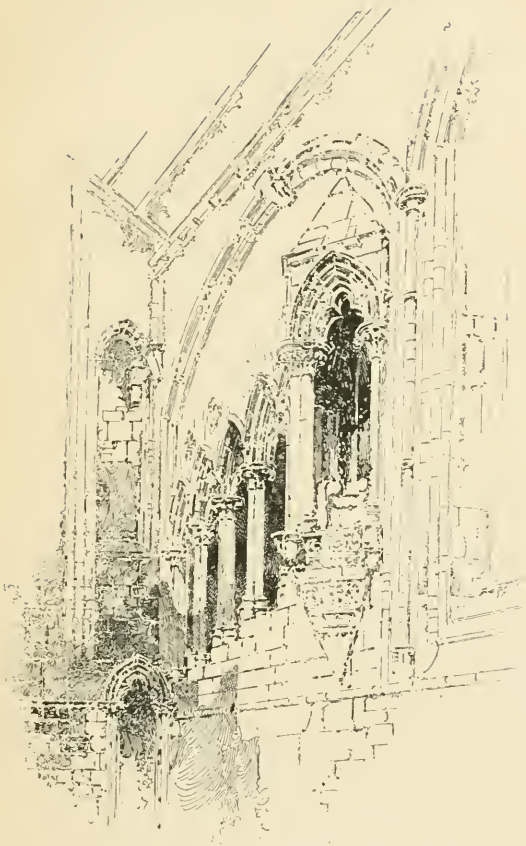
in all probability, have had good reason for enlarging his chapter-house, now that more peaceful times had come; at least, the troubles were now in Wales, where Edward I. was able to establish royal authority. The King was frequently at Chester during this period.

"The annexation of Wales," writes the present Bishop of Oxford, "contributed on the whole to increase the royal power, the personal influence of the sovereign, and the peace of the kingdom." At the moment of the Abbot's death, in April 1289, King Edward was in France, but in four months he returned to England. He had been three years absent. The country had been "drained of money to be spent in foreign undertakings," and this may account for the King retaining the Abbey in his own hands for two years. The refectory, or *Frater*, with its matchless reading pulpit, may also be referred to this date. The beauty of this can be realised from the accurate drawing on page 29, which is so full of life that one almost

expects to see a monk mount the stairs and open his book. There had been some opposition between the Abbey and the city about fairs or markets being held before the Abbey gateway, and it is shown by a charter that the dispute was amicably settled at this time. The charter is styled "Finalis Concordia de Nundinis in Vico juxta Abbatiam." It was signed before Reginald de Grey, the justiciary of Chester, "anno regni regis Edwardi XVII." —*i.e.*, in the year 1289. It was to this Reginald de Grey that precepts were issued some five years before, "to allow venison from the forests of Delamere and Wirral for the support of the monks then occupied on the great work of the building of the church."

Thomas de Byrche-Hylles, who was elected in 1291, lived through the remaining years of Edward I.'s reign, and died in 1323, some four years before the close of the reign of Edward II.

Edward II. was made Earl of Chester in 1301, and it may be held with some



Pulpit in Refectory

certainty that the character of the times and reign was not such as to favour enterprise in the adorning or building of churches. The murder of the King in September 1327 put an end to an unhappy life. In the eloquent words of our great historian :—"So the son of the great King Edward perished ; and with a sad omen the first crowned head went down before the offended nation ; with a sad omen, for it was not done in calm or righteous judgment. The unfaithful wife, the undutiful son, the vindictive prelate, the cowardly minister were unworthy instruments of a nation's justice."

About this time Ralph Higden, a monk of Chester, must have written the "Polychronicon." Higden's tomb may be seen in the south aisle of the choir. Higden probably took the monastic vows about the year 1299, and died in 1363. The "Polychronicon" is a chronicle of events from the Creation to Higden's own time. He wrote it in seven books because God

made the world in six days and rested on the seventh. He gives at great length the authorities from which his history is derived. It must have been a work of much repute, as there are at least a hundred manuscripts extant. Inaccurate he doubtless is, but considering the age in which he lived this is not surprising. The translation into English, now in the Chapter library, printed by Wynkyn de Woorde, is by John Trevisa, vicar of Berkeley and chaplain to Thomas, fourth Lord Berkeley of Berkeley; he makes many mistakes, but as an early specimen of English prose written in the year 1387 it is interesting. There are two editions of this translation, one printed by Caxton in 1482, and the other by Wynkyn de Woorde in 1495. Trevisa prefixes to his work a curious dialogue between himself and his patron, who at length persuades him to undertake the translation, and also an "Epistle" in which he tells his "worthy and worshipful Lord" that he will not spare travail, and then sets forth his method.

In the succeeding reign there must have been lamentable neglect, for we read of the Provincial of the Benedictines coming with others to Chester, in 1362, as Commissioners to inquire into the state of the Abbey, and the Abbot of the day, Richard de Seynesbury, resigned rather than meet the questions about his offences and the dilapidations.

Seynesbury's resignation was accepted by Pope Urban V. in the year 1363, and the Pope, writing from Avignon, conferred the office of Abbot on Thomas de Newport, who ruled the monastery for twenty-two years, being succeeded by William de Mershton, who lived as Abbot about six months. The date of the next Abbot's death is uncertain, but it was between 1411 and 1417. He was named Henry de Sutton, and a writer of the early part of the eighteenth century states that his gravestone "still remains," which cannot now be said. The Abbot who followed, Thomas Yerdeley, died in 1434; these dates seem to prove that

this was the Abbot who in 1425 was excommunicated for contumacy; he died in 1434, and as he was buried in the north side of the choir it may be concluded that he had been reconciled.

John Salghall became Abbot at Yerdeley's death, and on the removal of his gravestone, on which was the indication of his effigy in brass, in the year 1827, his gold ring of office set with a sapphire was found on the forefinger of his right hand; this ring is in the charge of the Dean for the time being. John Salghall lived till 1452 when he was succeeded by Richard Oldham, who twenty years later was appointed to the Bishopric of Man, but was buried in the Abbey in the year 1485.

He was succeeded by Simon Ripley (1472).

There seems to have been no great work recorded until the days of Simon Ripley (1472–1493), yet some of the most beautiful work must date from some part of the interval: the sedilia and the choir stalls, both

Shrine of S^t Werburgh

work of the fourteenth century, bear comparison with any like structure.

The present shrine of St. Werburgh must also be referred to this date; the lower part had always been in view, having for many years been used as the base of the Bishop's throne, but the crown, so to speak—evidently fourteenth-century work—was found, in 1872, built into a wall at the north-west corner of the Cathedral. It may be seen, from the beautiful drawing of the shrine given on page 35 that the lower part is solid and complete; the beauty of the niches can be detected, and we can picture to ourselves many in the Middle Ages kneeling at the shrine and laying their gifts in these recesses. The casket containing the relics was, no doubt, placed on the top of this base under the canopy. Again the accuracy of the illustration brings out the purpose of inserting plain stone, where to preserve the true proportion it was necessary to add missing portions. Every one can see at a glance the parts

which are fourteenth-century work and which are merely inserted. It is a fact of considerable interest that sufficient of the original work remained to put the parts together in their true relation one to the other. The height, the length, and the width are correct. In the drawing will be seen the figures, some of which were found in 1872. Attempts have been made to identify the persons whom these figures represent, but as the scrolls which were in their hands cannot with certainty be deciphered, and as some are quite destroyed, it can only be said that the shrine was richly ornamented by figures of Kings of Mercia such as Crieda, Penda, Offa, and Saints such as St. Ermenilda, mother of St. Werburgh, St. Ethelreda, her aunt, and St. Mildrida, her cousin. It must be borne in mind that these names are partly conjectural, as all the letters do not remain, but it is tolerably certain that all were ancestors of or nearly related to St. Werburgh. For instance, if

we find the letters "Sc^{ta} . . . . Ida" on the shrine, it is not unwarrantable to suppose that the figure may and probably does represent St. Ermenilda. If Professor Owen reconstructed an animal from a tooth and a joint of the spine, it is not an offence against science thus to reconstruct a name. The height of the figures is about fourteen inches. The date of this exquisite work shows how the devotion of the faithful was sometimes quickened by the surging of the world. It was wrought about the time when in the Parliament of 1371 the attack was made on the property of the Church, and William of Wykeham was made to resign the Great Seal of England and Bishop Brantingham quitted the Treasury. Ecclesiastics made way for laymen, and in searching of hearts Church folk were led to offer unto God gifts more abundant and of greater beauty.

Among these may be reckoned the stalls, and if in any case it could be allowable to compare small things with great, the stalls

at Chester might be compared with those at Amiens. The latter, no doubt, are grander, richer, more noble, and in detail present points of more sublime interest; but, notwithstanding all this, the beauty, the delicacy, and the whole effect of the Chester woodwork does not altogether prove unworthy of the suggestion that the genius of the artists was not wholly different.

Whether we consider the general effect, or examine closely the carving of the Jesse Tree surmounted by the Coronation of the Virgin, forming now part of the Dean's stall, the Chester work must be recognised as an example of an offering wrought in piety and supremely calculated to aid in worship. The *Misereres* are quaint and full of teaching—sometimes after the fashion of days becoming degenerate—of teaching not without sarcastic reproof.

Simon Ripley is said to have rebuilt the nave, tower, and south transept. But as he, doubtless, builded in later Decorated style,

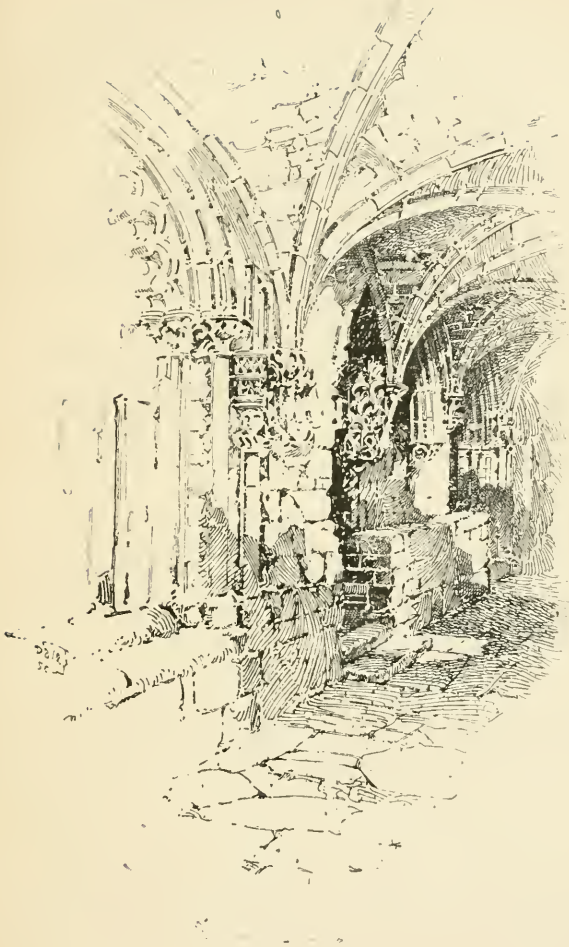
we do not see the nave as in his time; for the upper part is Perpendicular, and that not at its best. The south transept, remarkable for its size, is more in general outlines as he made it; but it has been sadly mutilated in more modern times, to meet what was deemed to be the needs of the parishioners of St. Oswald's. It was their parish church, and continued to be so till 1881. It was the source of many a struggle between the regulars and seculars.

The size of this transept may be accounted for by the desire of having four side chapels. The proof of their existence is evident to every eye: one wall with its moulded top remains, and the form of the others can be seen at regular intervals on the eastern wall. One of these chapels was dedicated to St. Nicholas and another to St. Mary Magdalene. The dedication of the others is not known unless what is stated about John Arnway may be taken to refer to the south transept. "John Arnway, who had been ten

times successively mayor of Chester, and died 1278, is said to be buried before St. Leonard's altar, in the south part of the church, where he founded two chantry chapels."

Simon Ripley's successor was John Birchenshawe, appointed by the Pope in 1493 ; to him is attributed the west front, and it is supposed that he intended to build two western towers. Indeed, the lower portion of one was built, and from the style it is not improbable that the date 1508 is correct.

In his time Cardinal Wolsey was directed by the Pope, Leo. X., to adjudicate between the Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield and the Abbot. The Abbot had apparently used a mitre, staff, "et aliis pontificalibus." The Pope's letter to Wolsey was "datum Romæ apud Sanctum Petrum, sub annulo Piscatoris, die vicesimo secundo Decembris millesimo quingentesimo decimo sexto, pontificatus nostri anno quarto." It is



North Cloister

Herbert Railton

much to be wished that no other sign of the Cardinal Archbishop having anything to do with the Abbey precincts was to be found. If we may conclude, from there being a boss in the cloister carved with his arms as Archbishop of York and a Cardinal's hat, that tradition is justified in leading us to believe he raised the cloisters, using in their construction a somewhat meagre Perpendicular style, we may be allowed to regret it, for the windows of the north aisle and the windows of the refectory are partly blocked up by the cloisters being made higher. In the very telling illustration of the north cloister, Wolsey's work can be discerned. The artist stood, perhaps unconsciously, under the boss on which Wolsey's arms are carved, but his pencil shows how Wolsey's vaulting crosses and cuts into the work of the previous age. Close to the arch over the door into the refectory (half seen) are the royal arms, on which, like Wolsey, the vaulting seeks support, and further, over the straight line which

denotes the *lavatorium*, or place where the monks washed their hands before entering the refectory, will be readily seen how the groined roof of the sixteenth century somewhat mars the arch of a very beautiful arcade.

Changes, great and far-reaching, were close at hand, the force of which was to be felt in Chester as elsewhere. Wolsey had desired to succeed Leo as Pope ; he thought that Charles V. had played him false ; his disappointment was great. The King of England soon came to believe that Wolsey was more than lukewarm about the matter of the divorce of Catharine ; in 1530 came his arrest and death. This was the year in which, after a strange eclipse, John Birchenshawe was restored as Abbot. As the date is the year of Wolsey's death it may be conjectured that Birchenshawe's being deposed was in some way connected with Cardinal Wolsey, for on Wolsey's death he was restored. In the meanwhile, about the year

The Choir, Ely.

1524, Thomas Hyphile acted as Abbot, but he was set aside in 1529, when Thomas Marshall for a brief space of time was substituted, but within the year the rightful Abbot returned to his post. There were, however, some great dissensions between the Abbey and City about this period which may have had some bearing on these incidents.

Cardinal Wolsey had, in fact, shown his King the way to suppress monasteries, but had not moulded his will to use his power aright or to a worthy end. Wolsey suppressed them to build and endow colleges. Henry saw a source from whence he could get money. He sorely needed it. If he could at the same time destroy the influence of the Papacy, so much the better. He succeeded in both. The first of the three visitations of the monasteries took place two years before the close of John Birchenshawe's rule as Abbot. This visitation prepared the way for the Act of Suppression passed in 1536.

In the last year of his rule, the second visitation by the Commissioners acting under the Court of Augmentations established by the Act took effect, while in the first year of his successor, Thomas Clarke, twenty-fifth and last Abbot, the third visitation was held, which, in fact, was to intimidate the monks into resignation.

Thomas Clarke, elected as Abbot in 1537, readily complied with the wishes of the King, and was allowed to retain the government of the Abbey, and was appointed Dean of the Cathedral when, in 1541, Henry created the See of Chester, severing it from that of Lichfield. While there is no cause to lament the use to which Henry put the revenues of the Abbey, there is reason to regret a flaw which is said to have been found in the deed under which the capitular body were endowed. The charter made good provision for the Chapter, but after a time, during which the Dean and Chapter received the rents, it was held that the

charter was void because of the omission of the word "Cestriæ" (Chester) in the sentence "concedimus Decano et Capitulo ecclesiæ Christi et beatæ Mariæ Virginis,"—"we grant to the Dean and Chapter of the Church of Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary." It must be observed that, when the church of the Abbey was made the Cathedral, the dedication was changed from St. Werburgh to that of Christ and the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The property at the time of the Dissolution, as at other monasteries, consisted of "temporalities"—that is, rents arising from farms and tenements; and of "spiritualities"—that is, money coming from tithes, fees, and offerings. In all, the sum total was then reckoned about £1000 per annum, the number of monks being perhaps forty. Never was a clearer case of retribution than in the way the property was disposed of. The tithes of the parsonages where the monasteries served the churches had long been

appropriated to the monastery. In all justice these "spiritualities" ought to have been given back to the parishes when the monasteries were dissolved; they were kept as prey, and passed for the most part into the hands of laymen, while a certain portion of them was given to the bishops and other ecclesiastical officers. Thomas Cromwell showed politic wisdom in such advice as he gave to the King: the civil constitution was greatly strengthened, and a real bulwark against the interference of the Pope was reared by giving the property of the Abbeys to the nobles and chief men of the country.

With the fall of the Abbeys it is scarcely too much to say that the House of Lords became a lay house instead of one in which ecclesiastics had chief power. The lay lords now nearly equalled in number the bishops and the few abbots still summoned to Parliament.

The first Bishop of Chester was John Byrde, who had been appointed to Bangor

in 1539; when he was appointed to Chester, in 1541, the See was in the Province of Canterbury.

In the letters patent creating the See it is set forth that "the monastery (or as the words stand in the original, *nuper cœnobium sive monasterium*) lately called the Church of St. Werburgh, and all its manors have been given to us our heirs and successors by Thomas, lately Abbot of the monastery," and it is further stated that the intention of the King is to take effect by the translation of John Byrde, Bishop of Bangor, to the Cathedral Church of Chester. This John Byrde had been consecrated on June 24, 1537, as suffragan (Penreth) at Lambeth by Archbishop Cranmer, John Hilsey of Rochester, and Robert Parfew of St. Asaph.

In the same letters patent which created the See the Archdeaconry of Richmond "nuper in ecclesiâ metropolitanâ Ebor" is annexed to Chester, and the whole is at the close of the letters patent made subject to

the Archbishop of Canterbury; but in the next year, 1542, an Act (33 Hen. VIII. cap. 32) was passed "dissevering the Bishopric of Chester and of the Isle of Man from the jurisdiction of Canterbury to the jurisdiction of York." The reason is assigned in the Act: "For as moche as his said highnes graciously considereth that the said Archbishop of Canterbury hath a sufficient number of diocesses and suffraganes under hym and in his province and that the Archebushop of York hath within the realm of England onelye two suffraganes"; this was one reason, and another is stated to be the great distance, almost three hundred miles, from Richmond, in case of appeals to Canterbury. Thomas Clarke, the first Dean, must have died before the Act was passed, so he alone of all the Deans of Chester was throughout his term of office a Dean in the Province of Canterbury. Henry Mann was appointed at the close of the year 1541, but in 1546 became Bishop of Man. It was in the days

The Nave from North East

of his successor, William Clyve or Cliffe, that the Chapter lost their lands, or he took the first step towards the loss of them. He, in fear, granted most of the lands to Sir R. Cotton at an insufficient rent. The next Dean, R. Walker, disputed this grant, and George Cotton, the heir of Sir R. Cotton, thinking that his title was bad, granted most of the lands to several gentlemen of the county ; in Elizabeth's reign the grant was made good to these gentlemen, and so was the Cathedral stripped of the estates which were to have belonged to it, and it has remained poor ever since.

The troubles which came upon the kingdom in the reign of Charles I. were felt in all their fulness in Chester. John Bridgeman was Bishop and William Nicols was Dean in these perilous times, and could not save the Cathedral from injury. However, Bishop Bridgeman, before the troubles reached their height, wrought some things which remain to perpetuate his memory in

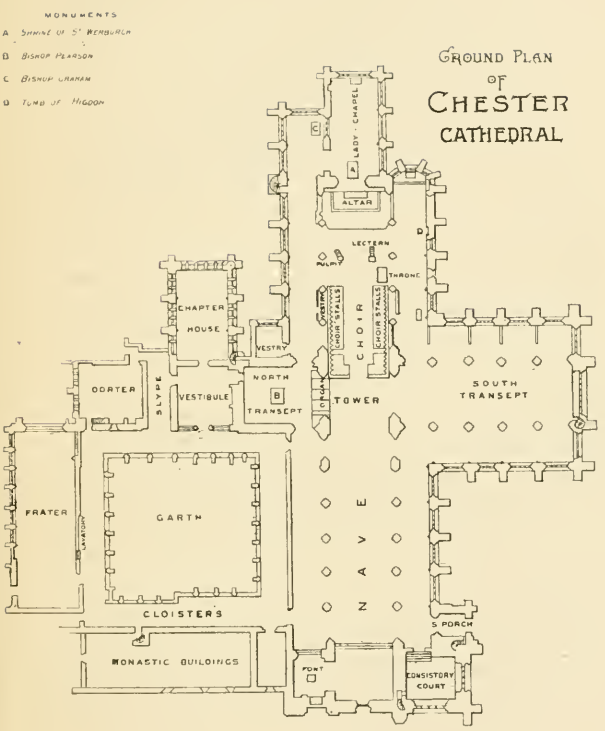
the Cathedral. There is now in the Chapter-house some woodwork with his name, his arms, and the date 1637 on it, and in the view of the nave from the north-east, including the large window of the north transept and the lines of the tower and the north wall of the Early English Chapter-house, may be seen nestling a little chapel to which access is found by a winding staircase from the north-west corner of the Cathedral, where a font now stands. The interior of this chapel, although in disorder, is marked by ornament which points to the time of Bishop Bridgeman; for instance, the plaster ceiling has for its relief fleurs-de-lys, and the altar rails are distinctly of the time and pattern of Laud.

Dean Nicols died in Cheshire in 1658. The next Dean, Henry Bridgeman, a son of John Bridgeman the Bishop, was appointed Dean in 1660, in which year Brian Walton was consecrated Bishop. He is famous because of his share in bringing out the

Polyglot Bible. Between his episcopate and that of Wilkins there were two Bishops, Ferne and Hall, although the date of the consecration of Wilkins is 1668, only eight years subsequent to that of Brian Walton. Wilkins was the founder of the Royal Society. He was a mathematician, and his apologetic method of approaching the fact that the earth goes round the sun and of his arguing that Holy Scripture need not be understood in a contrary sense, is strange reading. There is an original copy of this work in the Chapter library which brings home to us the wonderful strides which science has taken in little more than two centuries. His successor was the great Pearson, so well known and valued for his "Exposition of the Creed." He was consecrated Bishop in 1672–73, and died 1686. He was buried within the altar rails; some thirty years ago his coffin was found, simply lettered, "J. P., Epis."; it was then removed to the north transept, where it rests beneath

a monument designed by the present Sir A. W. Blomfield, A.R.A. Those who know the folio Aldine edition of Hesychius' Lexicon can form some idea of his diligence in study when they read that there is on the title-page of his copy, now in the Chapter library, the entries, "Hesychium integrum primo perlegi, MDCLV. Octr. xv. Iterum MDCLXVII. Mart. xxvi." It may be doubted whether any other man has read through Hesychius twice.

His successor, Thomas Cartwright, was famous in a very different way; he was a partisan of James II. and accompanied the King to Ireland, and there died in 1689. No one could be sure whether he died a Roman Catholic or not. Possibly he himself could not determine. Four years before Bishop Pearson died James Arderne was installed Dean; he survived Thomas Cartwright, probably having seen but little of that erratic Bishop, and died in 1691. By his will Arderne left an estate to the


MONUMENTS
A SHRINE OF ST WERBURGH
B BISHOP PEARSON
C BISHOP GRAHAM
D TOMB OF HIGDON
GROUND PLAN
OF
CHESTER
CATHEDRAL
LADY CHAPEL
ALTAR
LECTERN
PULPIT
THRONE
CHAPTER HOUSE
VESTRY
CHOIR
SOUTH TRANSEPT
ORATORY
VESTIBULE
NORTH TRANSEPT
TOWER
FRATER
GARTH
CLOISTERS
NAVE
S PORCH
MONASTIC BUILDINGS
FONT
CONSISTORY COURT

Cathedral. His portrait still hangs in the Deanery.

Such were some of the men who presided over and had charge of the Abbey and of the later Cathedral Church. The memories of former days stir the mind ; the fabric, with its different styles, manifesting the changes of the taste and power of the several ages, appeals to the historic sense as strongly as any building of a like kind. The thought of worship unbroken through the centuries from before the Conquest until to-day, of the continuity of the Church in England, as witnessed by the history of the foundation and of the very changes which befell it, raises hopes in every thoughtful one who treads its sacred precincts.

Although not strictly belonging to the history of the Cathedral, some of the gifts given to it are worthy of notice. There is a large piece of tapestry, the subject being Raphael's cartoon of Elymas the Sorcerer, which has been in the Cathedral since 1668.

It was worked at the royal establishment founded by James the First, at Mortlake in Surrey. As this tapestry was given to the Cathedral soon after the Restoration, the gift may have some reference to the loyalty of the City and of the Bridgeman family, Henry Bridgeman being then Dean.

A much more ancient and very interesting font was given in 1885 by the present Earl Egerton. It came from a ruined church in the Romagna, but it is not known whence it was brought to Venice. It is of a rectangular form, of white marble; in all probability it was orginally a village well-head in early Roman times, and afterwards taken by the Christians and carved with symbols for a font. The work is of the Ravenna type of the sixth or seventh century.

The gates of both north and south choir aisles, given by the Duke of Westminster, are Spanish work of the date 1558, the very date when Dean William Clyve was letting

the lands of the Cathedral pass from it. On the face of one is a label with the words, which are part of the casting, "In Deo salutare meum et gloria mea," and on the other side are the words, "Potentes virtute qui facitis Verbum ejus," with the date 1558.

The corresponding inscriptions on the other gate, evidently wrought at the same time and cast in the same moulds, are, "In conspectu Angellor: Psallam Tibi," and, "Benedicite Dominum Omnes Angelli ejus."

Another gift of the Duke of Westminster, a unique work of the seventeenth century, is a narwhal tusk, seven feet six inches in length, carved by a Flemish hand. The leading subject is the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, passing on to the Exaltation of the Cross, which, as we shall see, connects it with the Franciscan Order. A Jesse tree occupies about three feet, and above this is seated the Blessed Virgin with the Holy Child. Higher up is the Cross with the figure of our Saviour, whose

countenance is full of compassion. Behind this representation of the Crucifixion is a figure of St. Michael the Archangel thrusting down Lucifer with a cross. Above this come the figures of St. Peter and St. Paul, and the four Evangelists, and nearer the point is carved St. Antony of Padua and another monk holding up a cross; the remaining space is filled with figures of angels, each of whom in uplifted hands holds a cross. As St. Francis of Assisi, according to the legend, received the stigmata on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, it is more than probable that this curious and beautifully carved ivory belonged to some Franciscan church. It has found, we may hope, a permanent home in the Cathedral Church of Chester.

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